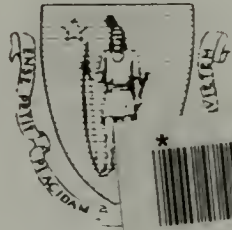


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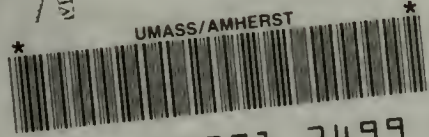


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PAUL CELLUCCI  
GOVERNOR

JANE SWIFT  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

## Governor Paul Cellucci State of Education Address

Wednesday, August 30, 2000

Richard W. Nutter Auditorium  
Beebe School  
Malden, Massachusetts

*Remarks embargoed until delivery at approximately 2:30 p.m.*



Thank you, Commissioner Driscoll.

And thank you Commissioner, Chairman Peyser, Chairman Tocco, Chancellor Gill, and the many people here in education for your commitment to the students and to the future of our great Commonwealth.

I am delighted to be at the Beebe School today to report on the state of education in Massachusetts.

In conjunction with this event, the Lieutenant Governor and I have also issued a report on the state of learning in Massachusetts. Also, MCET, which through its many efforts is developing new ways to connect schools, libraries, state agencies, and our communities, is broadcasting this address live on the web.

Over the last two years, Lieutenant Governor Swift and I have often talked about education and the state of our schools. But today, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century... as we enter a new era in Education Reform... and start a new school year... I will chart a course for the future of public education in our state. I will clarify our priorities, review the challenges we still face, and challenge all of you to renew your commitment to achieving the promise of Education Reform.

Seven years ago in this very city, I joined Governor Weld, students, teachers, city and state officials and others in signing one of the most important pieces of legislation in our state's history – the Education Reform Law. This law marked a shared commitment to reform our public education system in order to provide opportunity for all our state's children and to ensure continued prosperity in our state.

This city, like many other communities, is making clear improvements in the quality of its schools. City and education leaders, and parents are creating first-rate learning environments for your students with new programs and new schools, including this remarkable school. By making substantial investments to bring technology into the classroom, and by launching the



Youth Tech Entrepreneurs Program at Malden High, you are taking the lead in providing students with the skills they will need to succeed and to fill good-paying jobs, like the ones that will soon be available at TeleCom City. And, now you're developing ways to help students raise their achievement on MCAS.

Since 1993, from the Mystic Valley to the Mohawk Trail, significant improvements have been documented in Massachusetts schools. The state has invested over \$22 billion in public education. With one of the most aggressive funding efforts in the country, we have more than leveled the playing field – districts such as Lawrence and Holyoke now spend more than suburban districts such as Belmont and Milton. This year, state government will spend more than \$3.9 billion in the local schools – that's nearly two and one-half times what was spent eight years ago.

Since 1992, we've built or renovated 385 schools – more than one-sixth of our state's school buildings. Over the last six years, we've hired almost 20,000 new teachers to help lower class sizes, and we've put in place teacher recruitment programs that are a model for the nation.

We've given more parents and their children educational choices with charter schools, and will extend that opportunity to more children with the legislation I signed earlier this month that expands the number of charter schools in our state.

We have established curriculum frameworks to ensure our children are learning what they need to know. And, we have introduced new assessment tests – the MCAS – to determine how well our schools are doing in meeting the high standards established under Education Reform.

The first two years of MCAS scores have been disappointing. Last year, 32 percent of all 10<sup>th</sup> graders failed the English section of the test and 53 percent failed the Mathematics section. The results are even more troubling for students in urban areas and for African-American, Latino-American and Native-American students.





However, it's not just the numbers that are alarming to me. It's what's behind the numbers. MCAS is not an end but a means to an end – and that end is a high standard for learning. Right now, students aren't learning all that they should be learning. Real reform has not happened in many of our schools.

As a state, we have reached a crossroads in our effort to improve the educational system in Massachusetts.

I am very proud of much that is happening in our schools. But, as governor, it is my responsibility to face the challenges yet unmet. Massachusetts schools must become much stronger than they are today.

The Lieutenant Governor and I are here today, where the mission to reform public education began, to tell students, parents, teachers, administrators, college presidents, and business leaders that our work is far from over. As leaders of this state, it is our job to avoid the pitfall of complacency.

There is real opportunity for us all to share the challenge of raising student learning.

When the reform movement began a decade ago, there was a sense of urgency. Times were tough in our state, and many believed the absence of high standards in our schools was contributing to this economic downturn. Some students were graduating with a meaningless diploma because they were being socially promoted. As a result, students found themselves unprepared for the rigors of college, and businesses were forced to spend millions of dollars to train new workers.

Right now we are enjoying good economic times. And one of the reasons our state is doing so well is because our institutions of higher learning have helped produce the skilled workers our economy needs. But if we want to ensure our future prosperity, we have to make sure children in our public schools are prepared to go to college here and work in our high tech economy.





Now, while the economy is strong, and Education Reform has become almost institutionalized, it would be easy to allow the status quo to be good enough. But it's not good enough for me.

I look to the hopeful faces of our young children. I know that I am responsible for setting the standards for their education. I must set them high to ensure their future success, and the future of our state.

So there is no turning back. This is a challenge we have to meet.

Massachusetts has earned a competitive educational advantage compared to other states, but that advantage is eroding. States like Texas and North Carolina, where standards-based reforms have been implemented, and where they have stayed the course with reform, are gaining quickly and in some cases, have surpassed us in scholastic areas.

Massachusetts fourth-graders have consistently been among the top tier of students in scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress – or NAEP scores. In the most recent report from the National Education Goals Panel, the math scores of Massachusetts fourth-graders changed little over the years. However, 67 percent more fourth-graders in Texas scored at or above a proficient level of performance in math than in the baseline year for testing. North Carolina's gains were also impressive. In fact, because Massachusetts gains were so few, Texas surpassed us in student performance in fourth-grade math. If two of our state's top competitors are making serious advances in preparing their students to have the skills they need for the global economy, then the future prosperity of Massachusetts could be at risk.

Without a first-rate educational system, we cannot hope to continue attracting businesses and families to this state. Education is a quality-of-life issue. For many people it is a deciding factor in choosing where to live. If we lose our competitive edge in this area, other states with lower taxes and lower business costs will gain the upper hand. Our future is at stake. We must persevere.



Where that matters most is in helping students to achieve the high standards the MCAS measures. This year is an important year. Beginning with this year's sophomore class, students who don't pass the MCAS by the end of their senior year, face the reality of not graduating from high school.

The debate over MCAS will continue. Some have already called for the suspension of the test or easing of the standards. But I will continue to insist on high standards – our children deserve nothing less. There has been strong leadership at the State House in support of high standards. Senate President Birmingham and Speaker Finneran, architects and early supporters of Education Reform, have been steadfast in their support for high standards. Their commitment, and that of the Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature will be critical if we are to help our children reach this level of academic excellence.

I urge everyone in our state to ask what you can do to help your child, or your grandchild, or your neighbor's child to achieve excellence. Your high expectations for our children's academic accomplishments are just as important as the funding and the program guidance that the state provides.

This year, we have doubled the funding for MCAS remediation programs, and as you've just heard, I am proud that Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift has taken the lead in finding additional ways to help students improve their skills measured by MCAS. She will continue to work with educators, parents, and students as she has done this summer, and release a report on ways to raise student learning later this fall.

More than 160 years ago, in his first report to the Board of Education, Horace Mann wrote: "All children, like all men, rise easily to the common level. There the mass stop; strong minds only ascend higher. But raise the standard, and by a spontaneous movement, the mass will rise again and reach it."





We have raised the standards. The students of this state are rising to the occasion, beginning to meet these standards, and most importantly, beginning to achieve a higher level of learning. But further progress will not happen without leadership, hard work, and determination from everyone in this state. The demands of the future require our good schools to become even better.

That is why today, I want to reinforce three education goals for our state. I will work with all the teachers and educators in the state to achieve these goals.

Massachusetts will have a well-qualified teacher in every classroom.

Students will master the basics of English and math.

And, excellence in character will be emphasized in our schools alongside academic excellence.

The most important resource a child has in the classroom is a well-qualified teacher. I am pleased that today we are joined by many teachers, including some of our most recent Milken Award winners, nationally recognized for their inspirational teaching.

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, I had the pleasure to join one of the Milken winners, Karin Orbon, at a ceremony to honor some of our state's newest teachers. Hearing Karin, a business and computer teacher at North Brookfield Junior-Senior High, talk about the rewards of the profession was quite inspiring. In college, Karin was headed for a career in business, but instead she turned to the business of teaching – a business that she says is far more rewarding because it produces a product that is real, alive, and has hopes and dreams.

I firmly believe that the future of our children is literally in the hands of teachers like Ms. Orbon. The impact a teacher has on our children is immeasurable. There aren't many people out there who could name the MVP of last year's World Series, but I am certain, that virtually all of us, could name our most valuable or favorite teacher.





Now more than ever, when our state and our nation face a teacher shortage, and research shows that students in primary grades benefit greatly from smaller class sizes, we must recruit more of the best to be educators.

During the last few years, we've focused a lot of our efforts on attracting top-notch individuals to the teaching profession. We established and later expanded a loan forgiveness program for top college graduates who commit to teach in our public schools. We implemented the "Tomorrow's Teachers" scholarship to provide top high school students with free tuition at a state college or UMass in exchange for their commitment to teach. We also approved a program to lure top-notch candidates to the teaching profession with \$20,000 signing bonuses, and implemented the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers or MINT program, an intensive training program designed to attract mid-career professionals to education.

This summer, I visited the MINT program in three cities – Boston, Fall River, and Lowell. It is a strong program that is luring some dynamic people to the teaching profession – more than 150 this year alone. We need more teachers in the math and science areas, and we need to investigate every avenue to attract them. That is why today, I am directing the Board of Education and the Department of Education, through MINT and other programs, to reach a goal of certifying no less than 10 percent of all new teachers through alternative paths within the next two years.

We also need to find innovative ways to train young teachers to be better prepared for the classroom. Some colleges and universities are providing educators with the professional development programs they need to sharpen their skills and to learn new talents. Schools here in Malden, as well as in Medford and Everett, are teaming up with Tufts University as part of the Tri-City Technology Education Collaborative to train teachers to use technology in the classroom.

These kinds of collaborations are important and we need more of them. Our efforts also must be specifically tailored to our newest teachers, and we need higher education to become more involved in this effort. While colleges have improved their scores on teacher tests, they



still have a way to go to meet the standard of 80 percent pass rate for Department of Education certification. Today, I propose establishing two Commonwealth Teaching Centers at public or private colleges to model the preparation of young teachers. As an essential part of these teaching centers, I also want to establish two new charter schools that will be created as year-round laboratories to instruct prospective teachers.

These centers would focus on a whole host of initiatives that are geared toward teacher training including, requiring high academic standards for participation, promoting fluency in Spanish and literacy in technology, and offering MCAS acceleration during the summer for students not enrolled in the 12-month program.

In addition to training, we must also address the need for targeted incentives to recruit teachers in our neediest subjects: math, science, and foreign languages. Right now the dot.com world-and other business opportunities are quite attractive, and they entice many people who could become great teachers.

That is why today I am proposing incentives for differentiated pay to attract and to keep talented individuals in the critical areas of math and science. Any district that demonstrates to the Board of Education that they are offering differentiated pay in math and science would be eligible for state funding to offset increased costs. These specialized teachers are in demand, and school districts must have a variety of options to keep them teaching in their classrooms.

I am also calling on the private sector to recognize the shortage of math teachers, and to work with schools to create job-share positions that will allow individuals to simultaneously teach and remain in the business world.

To reinvigorate the teaching of English and math, we are focusing on teacher training in these subjects. We're requiring elementary teachers to take a reading course in order to be recertified, and we also have a new math assessment that will measure teachers' instructional skills in order to help them improve student learning.





But there is much more to do. We know there are still too many children in this state who are not reading at grade level and too many students who are not learning the math skills they need.

I am charging the Department of Education with establishing an annual conference on reading and an annual conference on math to promote best instructional practices. These conferences will build on existing teacher institutes and enable teachers and principals to share their successes in promoting student achievement and encourage other districts to use models that work. I will attend these conferences to restate my commitment to academic excellence.

In these specific basic areas, we will also continue to promote literacy programs including "Spread the Word", the program my wife Jan helped create five years ago that has placed thousands of books in the hands of urban students. Jan was a school librarian for many years and has a strong commitment to literacy. Jan inspired our daughters to read at a young age and she has shown me just how important reading is and that parents must embrace the critical role they play in their children's learning.

That is why we need to engage parents in their responsibility of helping their children master the basics of reading and math. I propose that we establish two weeks a year when we take a break from computer games and television and return to the world of reading. We will coordinate these weeks with similar national efforts, the Department of Education, public library commissioners, and other interest groups.

I will also encourage schools to support reading at home and in the classroom by working with libraries and the Department of Education to promote reading activities and to honor those elementary schools which have met school or community goals in reading. We want to encourage children to read by having contests that recognize schools for things like ensuring every child has a library card and helping all students read books, as well as honoring the school that reads the most books.





Aside from academics, there is an increasing demand on our schools to teach youngsters how to become good citizens. With memories of Columbine and other school shooting tragedies forever in our consciousness, we cannot shrink from our responsibility to teach basic human values, like respect for other people's feelings and the importance of hard work.

To address the need for safer schools, last year we established the Governor's Council on Youth Violence, which issued recommendations on how to curb school violence and to reach at-risk kids. One of the Council's recommendations focused on helping to stop bullying in our schools. And, this week we are awarding \$1 million in grants to support bullying prevention programs in schools in several communities. These grants will help schools target those in schools who are bullies, victims of bullies, as well as overall prevention education in the classroom.

We will also continue our efforts to help schools incorporate character education into their curricula so that our students learn the values of good citizenship. Last year, I was pleased to participate in the Department of Education's conference on character education. This conference brought together public and private school teachers to promote ways to use literature and history to help students understand the values of responsibility, respect, and perseverance.

And, we must also encourage more of our young people to engage in community service and volunteerism – whatever their passions, there are causes in their communities that need them. It is the responsibility of local municipalities and school leaders to establish and promote active community service programs in all of our schools.

As we continue to talk about advancing education, we can't lose sight of higher education's vital role in producing a workforce that meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. It is important that our colleges and universities and our schools continue to work together to meet the many challenges of Education Reform. I have outlined three major goals we will be reinforcing, and in the coming months, we will address a fourth – increasing pathways to higher education and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.



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The Education Reform Act of 1993 was based on three interdependent principles – quality, opportunity, and accountability. We set high standards for students, teachers, principals, schools, and school districts to ensure quality in the classroom. We made an unprecedented investment in public education and have remained committed to Education Reform to ensure opportunity for all students, regardless of the community in which they live. We have established accountability for the high standards that we have set in order to see real results in improving student learning.

Holding fast to these principles is essential if we are to see any meaningful changes in our educational system.

This is a goal we can achieve. With my focus and leadership... with Lieutenant Governor Swift's MCAS efforts...with continued support from the state legislature for high standards... with all parents taking an active role in their children's learning... with teachers committed to high standards... and students striving for academic excellence...our schools will provide students with an education that is their ticket to opportunity.

This city had a goal a few years back. It was to rally support for building five new schools for thousands of children. So you established a slogan: "Five New Schools – Yes, We Can!" We were proud to work with you to help achieve this goal. This beautiful school was one of the products of our partnership. It is now a place where children are learning in a first-rate environment. Here, they are inspired to achieve.

Now that the five schools are completed or underway, you've changed the slogan to: "Five New Schools, Yes, We did!"

We have a monumental project to finish in this state: to provide our children with a challenging public education that will prepare them to live and work in today's world.



We must continue our support for Education Reform. It is a massive undertaking. It takes perseverance. Today, this Commonwealth's slogan should be "First-rate Schools – Yes, We Can." It is up to all of us. Lieutenant Governor Swift and I will continue our strong support for this project, but in order to succeed, we must persevere together. What we do from here on in will determine whether we can say, "First-rate Schools, Yes, We did."

I am determined that we will have first-rate schools for our children.

I hope that you will join me on the road to stronger schools, and maintain our commitment to our children and to the future of our great Commonwealth.

Thank you.

